THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Course Outline

CST 1201N: Catholic Social Teaching II

1.	**Faculty**	: Theology
2.	**Department**	: Biblical and Religious Studies
3.	**Course Title**	: Catholic Social Teaching
4.	**Course Code**	: CST 1201N
5.	**Course Year/level**	: 1
6.	**Semester**	: 2
7.	**Lecture hours per week**	: 2
8.	**Practical /Tutorial hours per week**	: 1
9.	**Course Credits**	: 3
10.	**Method of Assessment**	: Continuous Assessment 40% Final Examination 60%

11. **Prerequisites:**
A core course for all students who have fulfilled the entry requirements for the undergraduate degree programs

12. **Course descriptor/ Rationale:**
The course applies the fundamental concepts in Christian ethics to society. It focuses on the society and social order, the family and the state, political authority and requirements for its exercise. The course also gives insight on the historical development of the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in Malawi.

13. **Aim of the Course:**
To enable students appreciate the relevance of the Social Teaching of the Church in contemporary society so that they can make informed ethical choices and decisions and assess such choices and decisions in their society, within the socio-political transformation of Malawi.

14. **Intended learning outcomes:**
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
    a. Describe the Society and the Moral Responsibility
    b. Apply the Church's ethical principles for Society
    c. Explain the relationship between various structures in Society
    d. Describe the responsibilities and rights regulating social life
    e. Describe the historical development of the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in Malawi

15. **Topics of Study:**
Topics covered in this course include:

    a. Society and Moral Responsibility, and the Church's ethical principles for society
        i. Society and Social Order
            - Aim and Function of Society
            - Principles of Solidarity and Subsidiarity
            - Society and Moral Order
    b. Social Order
        i. Structures and their relationships in Society.
            - The Family: Social status, Duties and Rights
            - The State: Social status, Duties and Rights
        ii. Responsibilities and rights regulating social life
            - Political authority and requirements for its exercise
            - Legislation and administration of Justice

- Promotion of Social-economic welfare and health
- Requirements for a just fiscal policy
- Criminal jurisdiction of the state
- Promotion of peace and national Defence

c. Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in Malawi
   I. Social, Economic and Political Involvement: Missionary Period
   ii. The Struggle for Independence and the Voice of the Churches
   iii. Pastoral Letters: Role and Message

16. **Teaching and learning methods/activities:**
    a. Lectures
    b. Group discussions
    c. Student group/individual presentations
    d. Questions and answers

17. **Prescribed Texts:**

Agostini, T., 1997. *Every Citizen's Handbook*, Paulines: Nairobi
Peschke, K., 1993. *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II – Volume II: Special Moral Theology*, Revised Edition, C. Goodliffe Neale: Alcester
Schoffeleers, M., 1999. *In Search of Truth and Justice: Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960 – 1994*, CLAIM: Blantrye.

18. **Recommended Texts:**

Baum, G., 1987. *Theology and Society*, Paulist Press: New York/Mahwah
Hoffner, J., 1997. *Christian Social Teaching*, Ordo Socialis: Koln
Lobo, G., 1993. *Church and Social Justice*,Gujarat Sahitya Prakash anand: Pune
Mugambi, N., 1999. *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity: A Challenge for African Christianity*, Acton: Nairobi.
Shepperson, G., & Price, P., 2000. *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915*, CLAIM: Blantrye.

CST1201N: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING II

SOCIETY, MORAL RESPONSIBLITY AND THE CHURCH'S ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIETY (for Class Use *only)*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

(Beginning of Lesson One)

Catholic Social Teaching is a set of moral principles or guidelines for action, which have been elaborated and refined through the Church's long dialogue with man or woman and the problems of human society. In other words, Catholic Social Teaching *is a body of social wisdom about human beings in society, cultures, systems, and processes of society that enables all human beings to grow to their fullness*. The course will among other things help the student **to** make informed ethical choices and decisions. This wisdom comes from:

a. Scripture (Bible)

b. Magisterium (The Teaching Authority of the Church)

c. Writings of Theologians

d. Witnesses of just persons and communities

e. Church and faith traditions

Catholic Social Teaching is a teaching that is meant **to** sustain and foster Christian and indeed every human activity in the Social Sector. Every person of good will understands the motives that prompt the Church to intervene with her doctrine in the Social Sector, a field which may not seem to belong to the Church's competence, but reasons may give competence for encounter, for dialogue, for cooperation in serving the common good.

Catholic Social Teaching is a part of the Church's Moral Theology which **is** concerned with Social, political and economic charity and justice. Catholic Social Teaching hinges on the nature of the human person and the nature of the Society. It deals with the good of the person and the common good. One thing we should always remember is that the Church teaches her Social Teaching to everyone, not just to Catholics who may be expected to accept her right to teach them. Hence the Church does not appeal only to her own authority in order to justify the teaching. The church *appeals not just to Revelation and to her own lived tradition inspired by faith, but also to human intelligence: to basic common sense.*

The Church addresses her social doctrine to the **human being** as he or she is involved in a "complex network of relationships within modern societies. {John Paul II: Centesimus Annus, 54} As an expert in humanity {Paul VI: Populorum Progressio, 13}, the Church is able to understand a human being in his or her vocation and aspirations, in his or her limits and misgivings, in his or her rights and duties, and to speak a word of life that reverberates in the historical and social circumstances of human existence.

Unique and unrepeatable in his or her individuality, every person is a being who is open to relationships with others in the Society. Life together in a Society, in the network of

relationships linking individuals, families and intermediate groups by encounter, communication and exchange, ensures a higher quality of living. The human being who fully lives his or her dignity gives glory to God, who has given this dignity to human beings. Thus Vatican II emphasizes that the common good that people seek and attain in the formation of social communities is the guarantee of their personal, familiar and associative good. {Vat. Council II: Gaudium et Spes, 32}

The Church does not teach these principles as if from above or outside human society, but from within it – as Christ did – sharing with her founder an absolute commitment to the dignity of all human beings, whose troubles and triumphs she has shared for so many years. We know that these principles are rooted in the Scriptures, have been developed by the Fathers of the Church {the first great theologians} and their successors, classified by the Councils and Popes, and finally summed up in the modern "Social Encyclicals" and other Church documents.

Catholic thinkers have been seeking ways of charity, justice and peace amid the world's problems, in numerous different cultures and systems. With many of these the Church has been in conflict, although she has also found much to admire and from which to learn. The Social Teaching of the Church is an integral part of her conception of life. The principle followed is: human beings are the purpose and end of every social organization. Indeed, "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel". (Justice in the world, 1971)

Since the beginning of the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II, which began in 1978, Catholic Social Teaching has won wide acclaim and serious attention among other Christians, among followers of other religions, and even among those who do not believe in God or Jesus Christ. These teachings have come to be recognized by many as more sensible and more balanced, more sophisticated than the political ideologies associated with both communism and capitalism. At a time when politics often seems to be less about "big ideas" than about getting elected, Catholic Social Teaching seems to offer answers to the concrete situations on the ground.

The Catholic Social Teaching has been broadened and deepened through the years by close attention to the question of culture on the one hand, and Christian anthropology on the other. Pope Paul VI and John Paul II have borne witness to the coming of what the latter has famously called a **"Culture of death"** in Western Society. To explain it better, they associated this culture with materialism and consumerism – the result of which is to regard everything – including human life – merely as a means to an end of maximizing pleasure.

The elderly and the unborn, in particular, tend to become regarded by such a society as inconvenient and expendable. To deal with this bleak vision, the Church's Social Teaching proposes a "Culture of Life" and a "civilization of love", not as a utopia, but as a true social and cultural reality that begins to emerge as soon as any group of people starts to take seriously the main message of the Social Teaching of the Church.

(End of Lesson One)

2.0 SOCIETY

(Beginning of Lesson Two)

Meaning and importance

Society **is** a lasting association of people for the attainment of a common goal, necessitated by nature or freely willed. Thus family, tribe or nation, are necessitated by nature. Willed societies are like religious societies, educational societies, joint stock companies, clubs for sports and entertainment. However, in the strict sense of the word Society, it may be defined **as** a lasting association of people for mutual help in the attainment of their existential ends.

Thus in order to fulfill ourselves we must cooperate and work together to create something good for all of us, a society that we all enjoy living in, a common good.

Without a fabric of trust and friendship, and without the moral and intellectual education that takes place in families above all, neither political nor economic society could function for long. This fabric is often called civil society.

2.1. **Society and Social Order**

The way people live together in Society often determines the quality of life and therefore the conditions in which every person understands themselves and make decisions concerning themselves and their vocation. That is why the Church could never be indifferent to what is decided, brought about or experienced in society; the Church is ever attentive to the moral quality, that is, the authentically human and humanizing aspects of social life. Society {politics, economy, labour, law, culture} is not simply a secular and worldly reality, and thus outside or foreign to the message and economy of salvation.

Society, in fact, with all that is accomplished within it, concerns a human being. Hence society is made up of men and women, who are the primary and fundamental way for the Church. Nothing that concerns the community of men and women, - situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, peace – is foreign to the Church's Social Teaching, and Catholic Social Teaching would be incomplete if it did not take into consideration the mutual demands continually made by the Gospel and by concrete, personal and social life of a human being.

Besides the principles that must guide the building of a society worthy of a human being, the Church's social doctrine also indicates fundamental values. Civil society emerges out of the family, and out of the relatively informal association of persons in a community of friendship. At a certain stage, more formal structures of exchange and ownership {economic structures}, and of government and decision-making {political society} will become essential. Civil Society is thus primary, not because it emerges first in time, but because the others depend on it.

Some modern thinkers have tried to explain human society on the basis of a **"social contract",** but perhaps it is more in keeping with the Catholic Tradition to speak of a **"Covenant".**

A covenant is a mutual commitment that creates a unity of persons so close that it amounts to membership of a family. This is what distinguishes it from a legal contract, which may outwardly resemble it.

In a contract, each side agrees to do a certain thing, and once those promises are discharged, the contract ceases. When a covenant is made, on the other hand, a gift of self is exchanged. In other words, each person places his or her own soul in the other's power. This is a much deeper, and more powerful relationship. It is sealed not just with a signature, but with a sacrifice. Marriage is the most obvious and common place example, in which vows are entered into that are so binding and so total that two people are said to become one flesh.

We cannot agree more here that "one of the key differences between a society based on contract and one built around the idea of covenant, is what holds it together. A social contract is maintained by an *external force*, the monopoly within the state of the justified use of coercive power {thus it is a society of individuals seeking their own benefit and entering into conflict with each other}.

A covenant, by contrast, is maintained by *internalized* sense of identity, kinship, loyalty, obligation, responsibility and reciprocity. These promptings cannot always be taken for granted and have to be carefully nurtured and sustained. Hence the centrality, within covenantal associations, of education, ritual, sacred narratives, and collective ceremony".

A social contract gives rise to the instrumentalities of the state – governments, nations, parties, the use of centralized power and the mediated resolution of conflict. It is the basis of political society. A covenant gives rise to quite different institutions – families, communities, peoples, traditions, and voluntary associations. It is the basis of civil society. This is one way of understanding between man as a political animal and man as a social animal." {Sacks, J. 1996. *Education, values and Religion*. University of St. Andrews Press.

2.1.1. *Aim and Functions of Society*

The **human person** is essentially a social being because God, who created humanity, willed it so. Human nature, in fact, reveals itself as a nature of being who responds to his own needs. This is based on a relational subjectivity, that is, in the manner of a free and responsible being who recognizes the necessity of integrating himself in cooperation with his fellow human beings, and who is capable of communion with them on the level of knowledge and love. Thus community life is a natural characteristic that distinguishes man from the rest of earthly creatures.

A society **is** a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society **endures** through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each person **is** established as an "heir" and receives "gifts" – talents- that enrich his or her identity and whose fruits he or she must develop. Thus the person rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he or she is part, and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good.

Because of pride and selfishness, a person discovers in himself or herself the seeds of a social behaviour, impulses leading him to close himself or herself within his or her own individuality and to dominate his or her neighbour.

- Every Society worthy of the name can be sure that it stands in the truth when all of its members, thanks to their ability **to know** what is good, are able **to pursue** it for themselves and for others.
- It is out of love for one's own good and for that of others that people come together in stable groups with the purpose of **attain**ing a common good.
- The different human societies also must **establish** among themselves relationships of solidarity, communication and cooperation, in the service of man/woman and the common good.

The social nature of human beings is not uniform but is expressed in many different ways. In fact, the common good depends on a healthy social pluralism. The different components {parts} of society are called to build a unified and harmonious whole, within which it is possible for each element to preserve and develop its own characteristics and autonomy. Some components – such as the family, the civil community and the religious community – respond more immediately to the intimate nature of a person, while others come about more on a voluntary basis.

The acceleration of interdependence between persons and peoples needs to be accompanied by equally intense efforts on the ethical-social plane. This is in order to avoid the dangerous consequences of perpetrating injustices on the global scale.

(End of Lesson Two)

(Beginning of Lesson Three)

2.1.2. *Catholic Social Teaching Themes, Principles /Values for Building up a Society*

The following are the main Themes, Principles or values of Catholic Social Teaching for building up a society.

- *Dignity of the Human Person*

The dignity of the human person is a fundamental value, always recognised as such by those who sincerely search for the truth. All the many differing and competing social concepts and social-political goals are based on varying views of humanity. It is these views which, ultimately, form concrete social policies and the basic structures for established social orders.

For Catholic social teaching humanity's transcendental origin, and the resulting reference to God in the Christian view of humanity, are of crucial importance. On the very first pages the scriptures report in the story of creation: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The human being is God's creation. That is the first and fundamental utterance of the scriptures about humanity. God created human beings in his own image. In that lies their incomparable value, as the image of God. Scripture does

not wish to express anything more than that when it states that human beings shall have dominion over the earth (Gen.1:28). And this does not mean absolute power (the right to destroy the environment). Not at all! Scripture wants to say that between human beings and the rest of creation there is a qualitative difference: in *worth* and *dignity*, humanity transcends the whole of creation because it is made in the image of God and is, at the same time, his confidant, to whom God speaks as an equal.

So, the dignity of the person is manifested in all its radiance when the person's origin and destiny are considered: created by God in his image and likeness as well as redeemed by the most precious blood of Christ, women and men have a pre-eminent place in the social order, with inalienable rights, both political legal and social-economic. For this very reason, every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offence against the Creator of the individual. The fundamental question to ask in all social and development issues should therefore be*: how much does this protect and enhance the dignity of humanity*?

The foundation of human rights is human dignity. Dignity, as it is used here, indicates the worth of being human. Consequently, it is not constituted by any human declaration or institution; rather, it is a given and shared reality universally. It is conferred on man by virtue of the creative act from which the human person took his or her origin. It lies in the fact that each particular human being and all human beings are, in common, human. Without human rights, human dignity cannot be realized in action. All of the church's efforts in the pursuit of both justice and peace are designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person.

This dignity is something due to the human person because he is a person, by reason of his likeness to God. It is the dignity of the person that constitutes the foundation of the quality of all people among themselves.

This inalienable dignity of every human being is what is at the foundation of human rights and corresponding responsibilities: the right to life and the corresponding duty to respect and defend it; the right to a worthy standard of living and the corresponding duty of creating a conducive climate for social development; the right to worship God according to one's conscience; economic rights; and political rights. It is when this dignity is crushed underfoot on the individual level, when due regard is not paid for values such as freedom, the right to profess one's religion, physical and mental integrity, the right to life's necessities and the right to life itself. On the social and political level, it is crushed when human beings cannot exercise their right to political freedom and participation; when they are subjected to unjust and illegitimate coercion; when they are subjected to physical and mental torture; when they are denied economic means for proper livelihood, etc

Therefore, recognition of human rights does not depend on any human institution or social covenant. It is God himself who demands it. The ultimate foundation of the rights of man is his dignity as a creature made in God's image. Indeed, the dignity of the human person is the main thread that runs through all the magisterial pronouncements (Papal, Conciliar and Episcopal) on social issues.

Every human person is created in God's image and is worthy of respect regardless of race, tribe, sex, religion, sexual orientation, employment, economic status, health, intelligence, or any other distinguish characteristics.

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- Love

The starting point for Catholic Social Teaching is the human person in communion, in a society. Indeed Catholic Social Teaching revolves around the human person, this is because the teaching revolves around love, a very important element in Christian values. The mystery of a human being is a mystery of LOVE. However, to be a person, and to be called to love implies that we are also part of a Society. Although we know that God loves us as the unique individual we are, persons never exist in isolation {No person is an island}. The origin of this is God. God is a lover who gives, a Beloved who receives and a Love that is both given and received.

To be a human person is to be part of a Society, beginning with the family into which one is born. To be made "in the image of God" is to be made for a loving relationship with others. To love others is to serve them, to do them good. And because of the way we are made, to do good to others is often the best way of doing good for ourselves.

- Link between Love and Justice

Love of neighbour is an absolute demand for justice, because charity manifests itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protects human rights, and facilitates human development. Prior to the works of charity are the demands of justice. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love.

- Link between Justice and Practice

Society must be organized in some way for harmony to be possible. The ordering or organization of society is either just or unjust – that is, fair or unfair. What we call **justice** is that state of social harmony in which the actions of each person best serve the common good. Catholic Social Teaching is therefore largely concerned with the question of what is just and what is unjust. There are several different types of justice, depending on which kind of social relationship one is considering. {Catechism, 2411}

The Church or any organisation or indeed anyone that ventures into justice issues should first be seen to be just if they want their message to be credible. "While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognises that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes" (JW40). Justice within the Church and in organisations includes respect for economic rights (fair wages); juridical rights and the right to share responsibility and participate in decision-making (JW 41-46).

- Economic Justice

The economy must serve people, not the other way round. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. They also have a fundamental right to organise and join unions. People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these

rights have limits. No one is allowed to amass excessive wealth when others lack the basic necessities of life.

Catholic social teaching opposes collectivist and statistic economic approaches. It also rejects the notion that a free market automatically produces justice. Distributive justice, for example, cannot be achieved by relying entirely on free market forces. Competition and free markets are useful elements of economic systems. However, markets must be kept within limits, because there are many needs and goods that cannot be satisfied by the market system. It is the task of the state and of all society to intervene and ensure that these needs are met.

- Rights and Responsibilities

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency: food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to oneself, to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

- Common Good and Community

Catholic Social Teaching sometimes defines this common good as "*the sum total of social conditions which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve their own fulfillment more fully and easily*". {Gaudium et spes, 26; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1877- 1948}

Therefore, we must promote the common good – those conditions which make it possible for all people to fully achieve their natural potential by growing physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

The promotion of the common good should be the concern of both the state and the individual person. The state's main contributions in this regard are its role in the promotion of basic human rights: securing public order and peace, and enhancing the general welfare of people. The individual person will contribute to the common good by bringing his or her interests into harmony with the needs of the community, and by making sure that his/her personal goods, services and talents are put at the service of the community.

The human person is both sacred and social. We realise our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. Human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. Human dignity can only be realised and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society.

How we organise our society, be it in economics and politics, in law and policy; directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The obligation to 'love our neighbour' has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.]

- Preferential Option for the Poor

The word **"Poor"** is understood to refer to the economically disadvantaged who, as a consequence of their status, suffer oppression and powerlessness. Although the term 'Option for the poor'

came to be widely used in the Church in the 1970s, the reality that designates this term, God and the Church's siding with the poor' is perhaps the single most characteristic mark of Christianity down the centuries. A preferential love should be shown to the poor, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes. This notion stems from the God of the Bible who, as has been earlier demonstrated, is on the side of the poor.

In Modern times, the preferential option for the poor has been shown in the ground-breaking encyclical of **Pope Leo XIII**, *Rerum Novarum*. Although the **Church** was slow in recognising the deteriorating condition of workers, eventually, in the person of **Pope Leo XIII**, the Church spoke officially on the "social question' of that time protesting strongly against the harsh conditions which the industrial workers were enduring.

A Preferential Option for the Poor is **a commitment** by individual Christians and the Christian community at every level to engage actively in a struggle to overcome the social injustices which mar our world. To be genuine, it must come from a *real* experience of *solidarity* with the poor. The challenge before whoever embraces this option is to share in real terms, to some degree, the very lives, sorrows, joys, hopes of the marginalized. Such solidarity also means a commitment to working with structures, organisations and agencies that promote the interests of the less privileged in society: the economically poor, the groups that are politically marginalized, people discriminated against on sexual grounds, peoples that have been culturally silenced. But it is not enough just to taste in real terms the pangs of poverty, one has also to make the commitment that the structural injustices supporting the marginalisation of certain sections of society are dismantled. Often times the best way to change things is to conscientize people to change the structures that oppress them.

- Stewardship of God's Creation

All people have been created by God and are a part of the larger society. Our commitment to the common good requires **responsible stewardship** of the earth and its resources. True stewardship calls us to *examine* how we *use* and *share* the goods of the earth, what we *pass on* to future generations, and how we *live* in harmony with God's creation. There is a "social mortgage" that guides our use of the world's goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. *All people* are to be respected and share the resources of the earth. By our work we are co-creators in the continuing development of the earth. Therefore, how we treat one another and the environment is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator of everything and everyone.

(End of Lesson Three)

The Principles which are closely related to the Common Good ***(Beginning of Lesson Four)***

There are two principles of Catholic Social Teaching that are closely related to the concept of the common good: solidarity and subsidiarity.

Solidarity means brotherhood/sisterhood or social charity, support and agreement among people who share the same aim or opinion. It implies a kind of social unity brought about by the free will of individuals. Solidarity is the way we share our lives with one another, so that what is good for one is also good for the others. This could be

coined as the horizontal principle of social life, because it defines the way we relate together among ourselves, as equals; the way we work together, help each other, form associations of common interest, and so on.

If solidarity is the horizontal, then subsidiarity is the vertical principle of social organization. Without it, the freedom that is essential to solidarity would be in danger. We might become like members of a hive or herd, dominated by the pressures of the collective, or the will of some tyrant who could control the collective. Human beings have the tendency to accumulate power. But love, by contrast, is a process of setting free, of creating space for the other. This implies that all power in a Christian community should be exercised at the lowest and most local level compatible with the common good. There has to be a contrary force against the tendency of power to accumulate. Thus subsidiarity describes a kind of hierarchy – but it is a hierarchy which differs from the political structures of this world in that power is continually flowing not upwards to the summit but downwards towards the base.

- Subsidiarity

The word 'subsidiarity' refers to something that is in relation to, but is less important than something else.

Subsidiarity is among the most constant and characteristic principles of the Church's Social doctrine that has been present since the first great encyclical of Leo XIII Rerum Novarum. It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities; in short, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.

This principle endorses the idea that *every person, family and intermediate group has something to offer to the community*. It is in this line that it is affirmed that the denial of subsidiarity in the name of democratization or even the equality of all members of the society limits and sometimes even destroys the *spirit of freedom* and *initiative*.

Here society is understood as the sum of the relationships between individuals and intermediate social groupings which arise and come about due to "the creative subjectivity of the citizens. This network of relationships strengthens the social fabric and constitutes the basis of a true community of persons, making possible the recognition of higher forms of social activity. This principle is made clear by Pope Pius XI who says:

"Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organization can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them." (*Quadragesimo anno, 203).*

On the basis of this principle, all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help {subsidium} – of support, promotion, development – with respect to lower-order societies.

Advantages and positive aspects of the principle of subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity defends people from the inhuman abuses by higher level social authority. Actually it calls on these authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfill their duties. This principle endorses the idea that every person, family and intermediate group has something to offer to the community. It is in this line that it is affirmed that the denial of subsidiarity in the name of democratization or even the equality of all members of the society limits and sometimes even destroys the spirit of freedom and initiative. The principle of subsidiarity is opposed to certain forms of centralization, bureaucratization, and welfare assistance and to the unjustified and excessive presence of the state in public mechanisms. Thus the absent or insufficient recognition of private initiatives and failure to recognize its public function, can easily contribute to the undermining of the principle of subsidiarity, as monopolies do.

The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of subsidiarity, according to which "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity entails

- that there be respect and effective promotion of the human person and the family;
- that there should be greater appreciation of associations and intermediate organizations in their fundamental choices and in those that cannot be delegated to or exercised by others;
- that there should be the encouragement of private initiatives so that every social entity remains at the service of the common good, each with its own distinctive characteristics;
- that there should be the presence of pluralism in society and due representation of its vital components;
- that there should be an adequate protection of human rights and the safeguarding rights of minorities;
- that administrative decentralization should be brought about;
- that there should be a striking of a balance between the public and private spheres, with the resulting recognition of the social function of the private sphere;
- that there should be the appropriate methods for making citizens more responsible in actively "being a part" of the political and social reality of their country.

There are circumstances that would demand that the Government should take its responsibility to supply certain functions. For instance there may be realities of social imbalance or injustice where only the intervention of the public authority can create conditions of greater equality, justice and peace. In the final analysis, we must bear in mind that the common good correctly understood must remain the criteria for making decisions concerning the application of the principle of subsidiarity.

God has not willed to reserve to Himself all exercise of power. He entrusts to every creature the functions it is capable of performing, according to the capacities of its own nature. This way of governance should be followed in social life. The way God acts in governing the world, which bears witness to such great regard for human freedom, should inspire the wisdom of those who govern human communities. Thus the principle of subsidiarity is opposed to all forms of collectivism. It sets limits for state intervention. It aims at harmonizing the relationships between individuals and societies.

The principle of Subsidiarity and Democracy

Participation in Community life is one of the pillars of all democratic systems. In fact, a democratic government is defined first of all by the assignment of powers and functions on the part of the people, exercised in their name, in their regard and on their behalf. It is therefore clearly evident that every democracy must be participative. {Centesimus annus, 46}. Thus careful consideration and concern should be taken to check in the citizen, any inadequate or incorrect practice of participation or indeed any activity that may cause widespread disaffection with everything connected with the field of social and political life. One may think of the practice by some citizens who make deals with institutions in order to obtain more advantageous conditions for themselves, as though these institutions were at the service of their selfish needs.

Consideration and concern must be taken also especially in countries where there are dictators. In these countries, the fundamental right to participate in public life is denied at its origin, this is because it is considered to be a threat to the State itself. {Centesimus Annus, 44-45}. There are other countries which proclaim the right to participate but in reality it cannot be concretely exercised, while yet in some countries, bureaucracy itself denies citizens the possibility of taking active part in social and political life. {Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 15}.

Subsidiarity and the Role of Government

The state has a moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. All people have a right and a responsibility to participate in political institutions so that government can achieve its proper goals.

The principle of subsidiarity holds that the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. When the needs in question cannot be adequately met at the lowest level, then it is not only necessary, but imperative that higher levels of government intervene.

- Participation

The principle of subsidiarity implies active participation. The citizen, directly or through representation, contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil society to which he or she belongs {Gaudium et Spes, 75}. In a special way, participation of all the most disadvantaged, as well as the occasional rotation of political leaders in order to forestall the establishment of hidden privileges is important. In fact, strong moral pressure is needed, so that the administration of public life will be the result of the shared responsibility of each individual with regard to the common good.

Participation is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in a social interchange. The Church's teaching insists that all participate, each according to his/her position and role, in promoting the common good. People have a right and a duty to participate in society in order to search, in collaboration with others, for the common good and well-being of everyone, especially the poor and marginalized.This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. As far as possible, citizens should take an active part in public life. As with any ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed conversion of the social partners.

In a nutshell, all people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.

- Global Solidarity and development

We all belong to **one** human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross ethnic or tribal, national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.Thus, to be in solidarity with others is to be moved by their suffering and to be uplifted by their happiness.Authentic development must be full human development.It must respect and promote personal, social, economic, and political rights, including the rights of nations and of peoples. It must avoid the extremists of 'under-development' on the one hand, and 'super-development' on the other. Accumulating material goods, and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect for moral, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the person.

The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of "friendship" or "social charity", is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood/sisterhood. The very rapid expansion in ways and means of communication in real time, such as those offered by information technology, the extraordinary advances in computer technology, the increased volume of commerce and information exchange all bear witness to the fact that, for the first time since the beginning of human history, it is now possible, at least technically, to establish relationships between people who are separated by great distances and are unknown to each other.

The Church emphasizes the fact that we all belong to one human family. As such we have mutual obligations to promote the rights and development of all people across communities, nations and the world, irrespective of national boundaries. In a special way, the richer nations have responsibilities toward the poor nations, and people with wealth and resources are linked in divine economy with those who lack them.

Those who remain untouched or unchanged by the suffering of their brothers and sisters around the world are suffering from serious spiritual underdevelopment. They need solidarity for their own salvation. The structures of international order must reflect true biblical justice. In fact, conflicts should always be resolved in the most peaceful manner available, ways which respect and build solidarity among peoples.

required. However, this approach of a just war is prone to abuse. That is why there is need for more serious public discussion of the use of a just war theory in propaganda efforts to build public support for war.

The church's traditional criteria for entering a just war are:

1. Just cause

There must be sufficient, valid and convincing reasons to wage a just war. These must then result in establishing a just cause for the war.

2. Competent authority

It is not anybody who can authorize a just war. You cannot just wake up one morning and declare a just war. The declaration must be made by a competent and legitimate authority.

3. Comparative justice

There must be a way in which a comparison could be established to assess whether the pros and cons really point towards war.

4. Right intention

A war is not declared just because individuals have crossed each other. There are so many factors involved in war so much so that as there are many people involved, the right intention must be proved by experts.

5. Last resort

Having tried all the possible and workable means to make peace, war is undertaken as a last resort. The warring parties must try to dialogue, look for mediators and exhaust all possible means of making peace. If all those means have failed then war is declared as a last resort.

6. Probability of success

In undertaking war, there must be some probable signs that it will indeed solve the problem. There has to be probability of success, otherwise, the idea of war itself as solving the problem serves no purpose.

7. Proportionality

There must be proportion in the outcome of the war. Will both side gain anything? Will it be for one side only? In other words, the outcome of war must be proportionate to the reasons for the war.

The criteria governing HOW to wage a just war, once the decision has been made to enter war are: